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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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INFO AMCONSUL Leningrad
USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIJING
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 10868

E.O. 12065: GDS 8/5/87 (MCCALL, SHERROD 8) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, UR, US, EEC, AF
SUBJECT: PETROV ARTICLE REJECTS EC PROPOSAL
ON AFGHANISTAN

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 09920, (B) MOSCOW 09983,
(C) USUN NEW YORK 02520

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1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

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2. SUMMARY: PRAYDA TODAY CARRIES AN ARTICLE UNDER THE BYLINE "A. PETROV," SIGNIFYING HIGH-LEVEL PARTY AUTHORSHIP, THAT FLATLY REJECTS THE EC PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN AND REITERATES -- WITHOUT CHANGE -- MOSCOW'S PRE-CONDITIONS FOR TALKS. THE TONE OF THE ARTICLE REVEALS SOVIET ANXIETY OVER THE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND PUBLICITY THE PROPOSAL HAS RECEIVED; ITS TIMING IS PROBABLY RELATED TO THE CURRENT MISSION TO ISLAMABAD AND KABUL OF UN ENVOY DE CUELLAR. END SUMMARY.

3. BENEATH THE RHETORIC, THE MAIN THRUST OF THE PIECE IS TO EMPHASIZE THAT MOSCOW HAS NOT MOVED AND DOES NOT INTEND TO MOVE FROM ITS PROCLAIMED STANCE ON THE AFGHAN QUESTION. AS THEY HAD DONE WITH LORD CARRINGTON AND IN THEIR MEDIA COVERAGE SINCE HIS VISIT HERE (REFTELS A AND B), THE SOVIETS QUOTE CHAPTER AND VERSE FROM THE DRA'S MAY 14, 1980 PROPOSAL FOR TALKS WITH PAKISTAN AND IRAN, BREZHNEV'S XXVI PARTY CONGRESS REPORT AND HIS MAY SPEECH IN TBILISI. "THE SOVIET UNION IS READY FOR TALKS," PETROV WRITES, "BUT ONLY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE TALKS IMBUED WITH A SPIRIT OF A SOBER APPROACH."

4. THE EC PROPOSAL IS NEITHER "CONSTRUCTIVE" NOR "REALISTIC," ACCORDING TO PETROV. HE ARGUES THAT BY CALLING FOR TALKS WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE BABRAK REGIME -- THE "LAWFUL GOVERNMENT OF A SOVEREIGN STATE" -- THE EC IS OPERATING FROM THE "TYPICAL IMPERIAL APPROACH: DECIDING THE FATE OF A PEOPLE BEHIND THEIR BACK." THE ARTICLE TAKES A PERSONAL
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SWIPE AT LORD CARRINGTON BY CALLING HIS STATEMENT THAT THE PRESENT KABUL REGIME IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE AFGHAN PEOPLE "THE CRUEST VIOLATION OF THE ELEMENTARY ETHICS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS." PETROV ALSO TAKES UMBRAGE AT THE EC PROPOSAL'S CALL FOR A NEUTRAL AFGHANISTAN, LABELING IT "BLASPHEMOUS" TO A STATE THAT "HAS ALWAYS BEEN NON-ALIGNED AND WILL INDISPUTABLY REMAIN ONE."

5. THE ARTICLE LINKS THE EC PROPOSAL CLOSELY TO

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US STRATEGY AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. BEFORE HE SPECIFICALLY REFUTES THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL, PETROV SPENDS A NUMBER OF PARAGRAPHS DEMONSTRATING THE "IMPERIALIST AMBITIONS OF WASHINGTON." THESE AMBITIONS, HE ARGUES, "HAVE ACQUIRED AN EVEN LARGER SCOPE" WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION. HE TIES U.S. "AGGRESSION" IN AFGHANISTAN WITH ITS ACTIONS IN EL SALVADOR AND CLAIMS THAT THE "SOLE METHOD" OF AMERICAN STRATEGY IS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS WITH MILITARY FORCE. AMERICAN "AGGRESSION" AGAINST THE DRA, PETROV CONTENDS, IS ONLY ONE PART OF A WIDER U.S. PLAN FOR THE DESTABILIZATION OF THE ENTIRE REGION FROM SOUTH ASIA TO THE PERSIAN GULF AND IS A THREAT NOT ONLY TO AFGHANISTAN, BUT IRAN AND INDIA AS WELL. AS IS THE SOVIET NORM, THE ARTICLE NAMES AND CONDEMNS AS PARTNERS IN THE U.S. INTRIGUES CHINA, GREAT BRITAIN, PAKISTAN, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA.

6. COMMENT: THE DECISION TO ATTACK THE EC PROPOSAL WITH SUCH AN AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC REBUTTAL ATTESTS TO MOSCOW'S UNEASINESS OVER THE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND PUBLICITY THE PROPOSAL HAS RECEIVED. IT MAKES IT OBVIOUS THAT THE SOVIETS INTEND TO RESPOND TO

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THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF CHALLENGING THEM
ON AFGHANISTAN WITH A TOUGH AND UNYIELDING POSITION.
THE TIMING MAY BE TIED TO BOTH THE OTTAWA SUMMIT'S
SUPPORT FOR THE EC INITIATIVE AND THE CURRENT
ROUND OF THE DE CUELLAR MISSION. END COMMENT.

7. KABUL MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

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